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AUTHOR Augerot, James E.
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ABSTRACT

This is the final report on the Romanian Conference Project. The conference, held May 12-13, 1972, consisted of three sessions devoted to the reading of scholarly papers; a discussion of the state of the field, which focused on cultural exchange, teaching materials, and organization of interested scholars for improved communication; and a plenum address on "Cultural Relations between Romania and the United States." The conference was judged a success because it established communication among persons of common interests; removed barriers between emigres and current nationals; and enhanced the status of Romanian studies by giving an indication of the serious scholarship going on in the United States. (AM)

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ROMANIAN CONFERENCE

James E. Augerot, Associate Professor
Department of Slavic Languages and Literature (DR-05)
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington 98195
Telephone (Area Code 206) 543-5484

Date: May 29, 1972

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May 29, 1972

Period: January 1972 to June 1972

Institution: University of Washington

Title of Project: Romanian Conference

Project Director: James E. Augerot

The University of Washington Conference on Romanian Language and Literature took place May 12-13, 1972 in the Conference Room of the Suzzallo Library on the University of Washington campus. Attendance averaged 40-50 people at all sessions.

The Conference consisted of three sessions devoted to the reading of scholarly papers, one session to discussion of the state of the field, and a plenum address.

The 16 papers were of generally high quality and very well received. ~~Abstracts of most of these papers are appended to this report.~~

The plenum address by Professor Constantin Giurescu, current holder of the Nicolae Iorga Chair of History at Columbia University, was on the topic of "Cultural Relations between Romania and the United States" and provided a welcome documentation in support of the need for precisely such conferences as ours. The extent of cultural relations between our countries has tended to be ignored in recent years.

The "state of the field" session was very useful. The topics introduced for discussion were in three general categories: cultural exchanges, teaching materials, and organization of interested scholars for improved communication.

Miss Georgene Lovecky presented a summary of achievements and perspectives in the cultural exchange program administered by the Committee on the International Exchange of Persons. She indicated a steady growth from one teacher exchangee in 1963-64 to as many as six in the coming year. On the research side there are currently 32 Romanian scholars in the country.

Most of the discussion revolved around how one applies either for personal participation in the program or how a University qualifies for a visiting Romanian professor. Miss Lovecky elucidated the proper procedures.

One criticism of the exchange program was leveled at the lack of fluency in the language of the host country. It was suggested that the Romanians are beginning to solve this problem with intensive courses in English at both Cluj and Bucharest. On our side it was suggested that funds be sought for holders of long-terms grants in Romanian for attendance at summer intensive language programs such as the current one at the University of Washington. It has been our experience that one summer provides for basic conversation and a starting point for sufficient language proficiency for research.

Other suggestions for improving the exchange program generally agreed on by the discussants can best be summarized in the report of Professor Adrian Jaffe. He outlined the following <u>desiderata</u>:

1. American professors in particular should be ready to teach general courses in culture and smaller courses in poetry, theater and writing. Modern literature and

contemporary activities are of special interest to Romanian students; therefore, it is not necessary for the professor to be a specialist, but it is very important for him to be flexible.

2. Persons should be assured in advance that the required materials will be available; projects should encompass only areas where supplies and facilities are available.
3. Access to needed bibliographic materials should be provided through a program of xeroxing out of books which are not otherwise available.
4. Responsibility for the evaluation of programs and the development of future plans should rest with specific officials as an ongoing function; but a general meeting of former exchange participants would surely contribute to better programs in the future.

We are sure that all participants benefited through the open exchange of views by both Romanians and Americans who have participated in the exchange.

Professor James Algeo presented a review of available teaching materials for Romanian. There seemed to be a consensus that although the recently published textbook, Modern Romanian, by Augerot and Popescu (University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1971) has filled the need at the beginning level, there is a great shortage of follow-up materials such as readers and more thorough grammatical aids.

Another problem of concern to several was the lack of good translations of Romanian literature and literary criticism. Several remarked that it was very difficult to offer any reasonable survey of Romanian literature or culture due to the absence of materials. The participants were asked to contact Professor Mersereau of the University of Michigan in regard to the possible appearance of a history of Romanian literature. It was generally recommended that one should be written rather than translating an extant one.

Finally, it was universally agreed that no decent Romanian-English English-Romanian dictionaries exist. There were, however, no suggestions as to how the problem might be solved short of a collaborative effort between national academies.

Professor Algeo also lamented the fact that Romanian is a poor step-sister in Romance departments around the country. He hoped that this Conference would help demonstrate the interest and importance of Romanian to recalcitrant department chairmen who refuse to let it into the fold.

Professor Dan Grigorescu of the Romanian Library in New York City described the Library and its services. He put out a call for general information which he promised to include in the Library Newsletter. Professor Grigorescu also indicated that the Library hoped to publish supplements to the newsletter consisting of scholarly papers both by Romanians and Americans. Professor Grigorescu left the impression that the Romanian Library was very willing to cooperate with any venture mutually beneficial to our respective countries.

Finally, potential organization of scholars interested in Romania was discussed. It was generally agreed that some form of communication should be established but no firm decision was taken on such items as annual meetings or newsletters.

Professor Michael Impey suggested that the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference will be able to make two sections available to Romanian studies. Professor Impey felt that this could be used as a "stop-gap" measure until something more permanent can be devised. It was then suggested that the Western Slavic Association might also provide a place for meetings at least for West Coast scholars. It was decided that Professor James Augerot should attempt to find a publisher for the Proceedings of the Conference. Professor Augerot is now attempting to do just that.

Professor Dan Grigorescu and Ambassador Corneliu Bogdan suggested that the official Romanian contingent in this country could be depended on in the future for some support for such conferences. Professor Grigorescu further stated that he would be happy to serve us by including news of the profession in the Romanian Library newsletter.

~~Along with five copies of this report, we include an address list of interested scholars, with Conference participants marked with an asterisk.~~

We must conclude that the Conference was a success. First, because communication among people with common interests has firmly been established. Second, some of the barriers between emigré

and current nationals were lowered sufficiently to allow contacts often thought impossible before. Third, the status of Romanian studies was (and, with the publication of the Proceedings, will be) enhanced by giving an indication of the serious scholarship now going on in the United States. And, finally, it would appear that an enjoyable time was had by all.

R. V. Osterle
Contract Officer

June 12, 1972
Date

James R. Augustine
Project Director

June 6, 1972
Date